Department of Community Services

The Department of Community Services

2004-05 Business Plan

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Message from the Minister and Deputy Minister

The Department of Community Services (DCS) is pleased to present its Business Plan for the 2004/05 fiscal year.

Planned activity for the 2004/05 year is focused on addressing program delivery challenges, and taking advantage of opportunities in a way which ensures that accessible, responsive and sustainable social services for individuals and families are available when they need them. The priorities include a number of redesign initiatives to make sure current programs and services are meeting the needs of clients and are delivered efficiently and effectively within the resources available.

These initiatives include the evaluation of employment support services which will look at the current range and delivery of employment supports services, to ensure we are providing the right services in the right way so that people have opportunities to participate in the growing economy and to become more self-sufficient. To improve our ability to help parents access affordable child care when and where they need it, a review and redesign of the Child Care Subsidy Program is planned. The Department wants to make sure it is making the best use of current subsidized child care dollars.

A number of initiatives to improve some of our child protection services and related programs are also planned. The consultant's report on the governance of the Child Welfare System will be reviewed, and stakeholders will be consulted to help inform the decision making process. The goal is to ensure that child welfare services are structured to best meet the needs of children today and are sustainable well into the future.

Improving the Department's domestic adoption services program is also a priority for 2004/05. The Department wants to ensure children in care have every opportunity to have a safe, care-free and healthy childhood and are able to develop and grow in a nurturing family environment. We want to make it less cumbersome and shorten the time it takes for families who want to adopt a child, and for children who need permanent homes.

Implementation of program enhancements under the federally funded Early Childhood Development Initiative will also continue. These will include expansion of the Early Language Learning Program, and enhancement of the Healthy Beginnings Home Visiting program for families with children under three. In addition, opportunities for children with special needs to participate in and benefit from inclusive child care programs will be increased and parent education programs provided through Family Resource Centres will be enhanced. The new Child Care Information and Support Program which provides parents with information on child care options, parent education and other support services available in their community will be expanded. As well the Department has been working with Sport & Recreation

to help promote and encourage physical activity in young children. In 2004/05 we will be providing over $726,000 in grant funds to child care centres to help them purchase equipment.

The Department will also be moving forward on renewing the residential support system for adults with disabilities. DCS recently released the *"CSA Renewal Discussion Paper"*, which presents a number of concepts and policy options for improving the current system. Once the feedback is received, reviewed and summarized, the focus will be on finalizing a new program model, and implementing much needed changes.

Planning is also in the works for continued expansion of the Affordable Housing program. The Department plans to proceed on this front within available federal/provincial funding.

The Department will also be actively working to improve our client service delivery. On an annual basis the Department provides services to 165,000 Nova Scotians. The goal is to ensure that clients have timely access to information and staff, that staff have the information, tools, and training they need; that a strong, open relationship is fostered with service provider organizations; and that the programs and services of the Department are organized in such a way as to promote efficient and effective service delivery.

The Department is aware of the fiscal realities of the province and the many spending pressures facing the Government. The Department has and will continue to work closely with Government to manage it's budget, to obtain the best possible benefits for clients and taxpayers from the expenditure of public funds. The planning focus for the year is to make sure current programs and services are meeting the needs of clients and are delivered efficiently and effectively within the resources available. Planning priorities are consistent with those of Government and focus primarily on protecting what Nova Scotians value - a secure, predictable social service system - within a framework of fiscal responsibility and accountability.

The Department and its staff are committed to improving its programs and service delivery to ensure that there will continue to be a secure and predictable social service system available to support Nova Scotians when they are in need. This commitment was particularly evident in the aftermath of Hurricane Juan which hit the province in late September. Staff of the Department, many of whom were without electricity and water, left their families during the state of emergency to come to the assistance of people in need. In recognition, the Department on behalf of its dedicated staff was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation from the Community Advocates Network.

David M. Morse
Minister

Marian F. Tyson, Q.C.
Deputy Minister

Mission

We are committed to promoting the independence, self-reliance, security and well being of the people we serve.

Planning Context

The Department of Community Services delivers a wide range of social services to Nova Scotians in need under a broad legislative mandate. These services contribute to better futures for our children and families, persons with disabilities, seniors, and communities throughout Nova Scotia.

Services are grouped into four core businesses – housing services, family and children's services, community supports for adults and employment support and income assistance. Annually the Department provides services to approximately 165,000 Nova Scotians, 17% of the provincial population, either directly or indirectly through the provincial network of service providers.

The services provided by the Department form a secure and predictable social safety net for Nova Scotians in need, and play a significant role in contributing to the overall health and well-being of people.

The Government has set five priorities for the 2004/05 planning year:

Legislative Mandate

- Adoption Information Act
- Day Care Act
- Children and Family Services Act
- Disabled Persons Commission Act (Minister is responsible for the Commission)
- Employment Support and Income Assistance Act
- Homes for Special Care Act
- Housing Act
- Housing Development Corporation Act

Community Services Programs & Services Directly Influence the Following Determinants of Health

- ✔ Income and Social Status
- ✔ Social Support Networks
- ✔ Physical Environments
- ✔ Personal Health Practices & Coping Skills
- ✔ Healthy Child Development

Source: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/phdd/case_studies/appendix_1/analysis.html

- Health care – better, faster health care and healthier Nova Scotians;
- Learning is succeeding;
- Building greater prosperity;
- Fiscal responsibility and accountability;
- Protecting what Nova Scotians value.

The planning priorities of the Department for the upcoming year flow from its strategic goals. Much of the planned activity for the 2004/05 year is focused on addressing program delivery challenges, and taking advantage of opportunities in a way which ensures that accessible, responsive and sustainable social services are available to individuals and families when they need them. This is key to protecting what Nova Scotian's value, in a fiscally responsible manner.
The Department has identified a number of challenges and opportunities as key considerations in planning for the 2004/05 fiscal year.

Program Delivery Challenges

The growing economy has had a positive effect on the numbers of individuals and families relying on income assistance. The income assistance caseload has declined by 22% since 1999, from 42,008 to 33,033. At the same time as more Nova Scotians move toward self-sufficiency, fewer families are coming into the income assistance system. With children's benefits like the Nova Scotia Child Benefit and National Child Benefit available to all low-income Nova Scotia families, the need to access income assistance has decreased. For those individuals and families in need of income assistance, with the help of Employment Support Services, approximately 3,200 were successful in seeking employment in 2003/04.

These trends are certainly encouraging. However, making further inroads in reducing reliance on income assistance is becoming more challenging. Many clients face multiple barriers to employment, either because of changing family circumstance, disability, or education/training gaps. Almost 50% of the current caseload has some level of disability, many long-term. The number of single parent families, while declining, continues to be a significant part of the caseload. Many clients have not completed high school, and some have less than Grade 9. Research shows that there is a noticeably higher unemployment rate for individuals without a high school education than those who graduated from high school. The cost per case of the current caseload is increasing, as more and more disability and employment/training related supports are required to assist people with health and medical expenses, and to help people participate in training and employment activities.

Access to safe and affordable housing for low-income Nova Scotians is a pressing issue. Nova Scotia has some of the oldest housing stock in the country. Some 40,000 households have indicated that their homes are in need of repairs. Housing and rental prices are increasing annually, making it difficult for

low-income families to own and maintain a home or find suitable rental accommodation at reasonable rents. Of particular concern is the cost of housing in the Halifax Region and surrounding areas. Economic growth and related in-migration to urban communities are putting additional pressure on the housing and rental markets.

Providing the appropriate supports for children in care is also becoming more challenging. The number of children in care and the cost of providing support for these children is increasing. These children often have multiple needs related to medical, mental health, educational and/or judicial issues. Court decisions occasionally require DCS to provide services beyond its current mandate, adding to budget and program expansion pressures. Over time this has created expectations among service providers, other government departments and the general public that DCS has unlimited capacity to address gaps in other service areas and to improve programs.

Finding secure long term family placement options for children in care is also becoming more difficult. Adoption is currently such a lengthy process that some families wanting to adopt become discouraged. As family settings decline, the need for more expensive residential placement grows. The demand for in-home support for families with children with disabilities has leveled off at 1,350 cases; however the transition from children's services to adult services for in home support remains a challenge as the adult program currently does not provide in-home support.

The residential support system for adults with disabilities is struggling to maintain current service levels. Client needs and expectations are changing, requiring a more flexible and responsive support system. Gaps exist in the current service continuum, particularly with respect to the lack of services like in-home support. This creates pressure on families and results in increased demand for placement outside the home. Gaps also exist in services for people with multiple disabilities/severe challenges who require intensive/multiple professional supports. Public opinion is divided on how these types of services should be provided: some families, clients and advocates support the continued development of small option homes, while others support the development of small facilities with on-site multi-disciplinary professional staff.

The Department also recognizes that there is a need to strengthen governance and accountability mechanisms to ensure that the best possible results are achieved with the public resources made available to DCS. One particularly challenging area is the current mixed governance model for the delivery of child welfare services. Both the Children's Aid Societies and the Department agree this needs to be examined. Strengthening relationships with service providers and partners is another challenge and key to success of improving overall accountability and service quality.

Opportunities

In 2003/04 federal funding for the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) was extended for three years. This has enabled the Department to continue to assist low-income households to undertake needed home repairs. In addition, under the $36 million, federal/provincial cost-shared Affordable Housing Agreement, DCS will be able to build and renovate housing units to help low to moderate income households access safe, affordable housing. The Department is committed to preserving the housing stock for low-income Nova Scotians, enhancing rent supplement programs and creating new affordable housing units.

Investing in programs and services to enhance the lives of young children continues to be a priority of the Department. Since 2001, the Department has worked to develop and expand programs and services for children under the federally funded Early Childhood Development Initiative. To date the investment in services and programs for young children exceeds $36 million. These investments include funding to increase the number of subsidized spaces in child care centres; training for child care providers; enhancements to the Healthy Beginnings Program which ensures that all mothers with newborn children are contacted by a public health nurse or lay community visitors; and early language and learning programs for young children.

In September the Minister of Education tabled in the House of Assembly the ***Report of the BLAC (Black Learners Advisory Committee) Implementation Review Committee***. The report discusses action taken to date with respect to recommendations set out in the 1994 BLAC Report and makes suggestions for future action. The Department's Employment Support Services section was recognized in the Report for the valuable contribution it has made in providing learning support services. In 2004/05 DCS will be working with the Early Childhood Education Training Institutes to implement curricula that will be inclusive of African Nova Scotians and providing expertise and support to Human Resource Development Canada in the development of programs that would provide opportunities for African Nova Scotians.

In 2004/05 the Department will also have the opportunity to work with the Department of Education to pilot a new Ready to Learn voluntary, pre-school program for 4-year old children. Education is the lead department, with Community Services and Health as partner Departments. The pilot curriculum will be activity-based, and emphasize socialization skills, that help children become more "ready to learn" by the time they enter school. The first pilots will be targeted in areas where access to child care is limited, and where school space is now available. The implementation date is scheduled for 2005/06.

Administration Challenges & Planned Activities

There are a number of administration challenges, while internal to DCS, which impact on the Department's ability to provide quality services efficiently, effectively and within available resources.

One of the major challenges on this front is the need to recruit and/or retain a highly skilled workforce. Within the next five years, approximately 27% of the department's employees will be eligible to retire. To ensure that the department is prepared for this eventuality, a succession planning strategy, including the completion of career plans for all staff and the development of a training and development plan will be completed in 2004/05. The Department will also be looking at ways to recognize the valuable contribution which staff make in helping the Department achieve its goals.

The restructuring of the Department which began in the fall of 2003 will be completed in 2004/05. The restructuring positions the Department to improve services for clients through a stronger emphasis on policy research and analysis, and better overall coordination and delivery of services and supports. Beginning early in 2004/05, DCS will also start developing a strategic plan which will help set a common direction for the future.

Upgrading the Department's aging information technology systems is another pressing issue. In 2004/05 the Department will begin to implement a modern, integrated case management system. Implementation will follow a phased-in approach and will proceed within available resources.

Budget

Government is committed to a balanced budget and DCS is committed to delivering quality programs and services within the resources made available. Community Services will continue to put in place mechanisms for effective internal management that will put the Department on a fiscally sustainable foundation by making the most effective use of available dollars in an environment of many competing priorities. In delivering it's programs and services, Community Services will focus on strengthening client service delivery and process improvements to make sure we are able to serve Nova Scotians now and in the future.

The priorities for the 2004/05 fiscal year focus primarily on redesign initiatives to ensure current programs and services are meeting the needs of clients and are delivered efficiently and effectively within the resources available.

Core Business Areas

The Department's key businesses are grouped into four core service areas: employment support and income assistance, family and children's services, housing services and community supports for adults with disabilities.

Employment Support and Income Assistance

The thrust of Nova Scotia's Employment Support and Income Assistance Program is to help people maximize their own level of self-sufficiency. The support services offered by the Department include:

- financial assistance to cover basic necessities to individuals and families;
- expenses related to special needs for employability and training, such as dental and eyeglasses;
- a range of employment support services available to all eligible income assistance recipients;
- prescription drug coverage for income assistance recipients and people making the transition to work;
- financial assistance programs to help seniors maintain their independence in their own homes for as long as possible, including Special Social Assistance, Property Tax Rebate and Rental Assistance Programs;
- employment assistance for persons with disabilities under the federal/provincial Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD) program;
- child benefits to Nova Scotian families with annual incomes of less than $20,921 who have children under the age of 18 years through the Nova Scotia Child Benefit Program.

Family and Children's Services

The future of Nova Scotia is based on providing safe and nurturing environments for children to develop to their full potential. Community Services provides a full range of community-based, prevention-oriented supports for both children and families, including:

- child protection services that assess all reports of alleged child abuse and neglect, and deliver a range of interventions, counseling and placement services for children and youth in need of protection (i.e., foster care, adoptions and/or residential services);

- programs that support families and foster healthy child development including, child care subsidies at licensed, full-day child care centres; financial support to non profit child care centres to enable preschool children of low-income families to participate in a 'head start' or enriched part-day child care program; and funding to help full and part-day child care centres include children with special needs;

- Early Intervention Services to help young children with special needs reach their potential by working directly with young children (0 - 6 years) and families in their homes;

- support for a variety of community outreach services including: transition houses for abused women and their children; women's centres; intervention programs for abusive men; and coordination of community development initiatives focused on prevention of child abuse, the improvement of outcomes for children, parent education and support through Family Resource Centres;

- support programs for families who care for their children with physical and developmental disabilities at home through in-home support and respite care services.

The Department also regulates the provision of services from a range of service providers through licensing, developing standards and policies, as well as evaluating and monitoring compliance. For example, we license 378 child-care centres, 31 residential child-caring facilities, and 17 small option homes. We also complete yearly re-evaluations of 661 foster homes.

Housing Services

Housing is a basic need, fundamental to personal well being, and the base upon which to build healthy and sustainable communities. Housing Services provides safe affordable housing to people across the province and uses its existing buildings, and its technical and financial resources to support communities. The variety of housing services offered by the Department includes:

- housing assistance programs for low to moderate income Nova Scotians to help them make repairs to their homes;
- 12,500 public housing units which provide housing for approximately 18,500 Nova Scotians;
- administration of third party agreements for approximately 9,000 cooperative and other non profit housing units;
- administration of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Nova Scotia loan portfolio of approximately $180 million and $37 million in provincial-funded loans to homeowners, and to non-profit organizations;
- development of moderately-priced serviced buildings lots;
- development of new affordable homeowner and rental housing under the Affordable Housing Program.

In addition, we provide space in our existing public housing buildings for community groups to provide services to support our tenants and their communities, including parent and family resource centres, day care centres and breakfast programs for children.

Community Supports for Adults

Access to appropriate residential support services for persons with disabilities is an essential part of participation in the community and key to increasing independence. The Department provides services that include:

- a broad range of residential support services for adults with intellectual disabilities, long term mental illness, and physical disabilities;

- a variety of vocational, day program support and employment services through residential support services or in Adult Service Centres;
- assessment and classification services to identify the abilities and unmet needs of people needing care and/or supervision which help people access appropriate services;
- licensing, inspection and monitoring services to ensure standards are met in all residential living settings that provide care and supervision for persons with disabilities.

Strategic Goals

The Department's strategic goals are to ensure:

- individuals and families are self-sufficient and able to support themselves;
- children, youth and persons with disabilities are protected and supported within families and communities that promote their healthy development;
- Nova Scotians are assisted in obtaining safe, affordable, appropriate and sustainable housing;
- services are provided in an efficient and accountable manner through effective service delivery.

Priorities 2004-05

The planning priorities for 2004-05 are organized around Community Services' strategic goals and are consistent with Government's priorities.

These strategic goals reflect a more department-wide and integrated focus rather than a specific program focus. This approach reinforces the Department's restructuring efforts to create a more horizontal and integrated approach to program development and delivery.

Strategic Goal - Individuals and families are self-sufficient and are able to support themselves.

Priority **To conduct an evaluation of the Employment Support Services component of the Employment Supports and Income Assistance Program. The goal is to ensure that appropriate, affordable and responsive services are available to meet the changing needs of clients, and that these services enable clients to increase their level of employability and their ability to support themselves.**

Since 1999 the Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA) caseload has declined by some 9,000 cases. The current annual caseload is approximately 33,000 representing some 70,000 beneficiaries, or a little over 7% of Nova Scotia's population. Many of the current clients have multiple barriers to employment which make it difficult for them to achieve and sustain self-sufficiency.

In 2004/05 the Department plans to undertake an evaluation of the Employment Support Services component of the ESIA program. Given the changing caseload and changing profile of clients the time is right to examine the current range and delivery of employment supports services. The results of the evaluation will be used to identify improvements which can be made in the short term, and to guide future program design and service delivery.

Priority **To review and redesign the Child Care Subsidy Program. The goal is to ensure maximum utilization of the existing subsidies for child care spaces and ensure movement of subsidized child care spaces to where they are most needed.**

One of the common problems experienced by parents with children is access to child care services. When appropriate, affordable child care is not available it becomes a barrier to participating in training, employment or community activities.

The redesign project will proceed in two phases over the next two years, and will be funded under the Early Childhood Development Initiative. In 2004/05 the Department plans to undertake a review of the current Child Care Subsidy program with a view to identifying options for redesign. This program provides subsidies to families in need to help with the cost of child care at approved Child Care Centres.

During 2004/05, Child Care Services will take the lead in researching the current literature, examining delivery models and practices in other jurisdictions, consulting with stakeholders and developing options for redesign. A report, including recommendations, will be prepared and strategies for implementation will be developed. Implementation will begin early in 2005/06.

Strategic Goal - Children, youth, and persons with disabilities are protected and supported within families and communities that promote their healthy development.

Priority **To redesign the Department's domestic adoption services. The goal of the redesign is to develop an adoption program which helps families who want to, adopt a child, so that children in care have a greater opportunity to live with a family in a stable home environment.**

The current approach to domestic adoption is a lengthy process and it now takes years to adopt a child. Many families wanting to adopt get discouraged. Not only does this add to the cost of maintaining children in the care and custody of the Department, but more importantly, it means that many children do not have the opportunity to live in a family environment. Research has shown that a secure, stable family environment is an important factor in heathy child development.

Work began on this initiative in late 2003/04 with a review of adoption legislation and programs across the country. During 2004/05, as part of the development of a new adoption service model, options for changes to the current system will be developed and consultations with existing service delivery agencies and identified stakeholders will be undertaken. A recommended model will be developed, together with strategies for implementation.

Priority **To continue to develop strategies and implement programs and services under the Early Childhood Development Initiative. The goal is to strengthen services for families with children, recognizing that supports provided for young children today will help create healthy and strong children tomorrow, and future prosperity for the province.**

The Early Childhood Development Initiative is a jointly funded federal/provincial program. Under this Initiative, provinces are able to design programs and services which meet the specific needs of their communities. In Nova Scotia the approach is to strengthen and expand a broad array of child and family programs and services, including child care subsidies, parent education and support, home-visiting services, volunteer programs, inclusion initiatives for children with special needs, early language development and enhanced training for child care practitioners. To date, more than $36 million has been invested to strengthen children's services.

Within the funding available, priorities for the 2004/05 will focus on:

- supporting the speech and cognitive development of children through the expansion of the new Early Language and Learning Program;

- supporting parents and care givers by providing information on child care options, parent education and other support services available in their community through the expansion of the new Child Care Information and Support Program;

- working in partnership with Family Resource Centres to continue to develop and support parent volunteer programs and expand parent education programs provided through the Resource Centres;

- develop a strategy to increase the number of opportunities for seniors to participate in volunteer activities;

- continue to promote physical activity in young children by providing child care centres with additional funds for the purchase of materials and equipment;

- providing increased opportunities for children with special needs to participate in and benefit from child care programs by focusing on inclusion strategies;

- supporting parents with children under three by enhancing the Healthy Beginnings Home Visiting Program, incorporating community-based home visitors to reach more families in need.

Priority **To review the consultants report on the governance of the Child Welfare System and consult with stakeholders to inform the decision making process. The goal is to ensure that child welfare services are structured to best meet the needs of children today and are sustainable well into the future.**

The current Child Welfare delivery system was established many decades ago. It is a mixed service delivery model with services provided through fourteen community-based Children's Aid Societies and six government-run district offices. While there are benefits to both models, having a mixed structure has posed various challenges to effective service delivery. Among other things there is duplication of effort, difficulty in getting consensus, and often very lengthy decision making. Both the Children's Aid Societies and the Department agreed that the current delivery model needed to be examined for improvement.

During 2003/04 consultants were retained to do a comprehensive review of the governance and business model of the Child Welfare System. The objective of the review was to develop a comprehensive governance and accountability framework which includes clearly established roles and responsibilities, fiscal and outcome accountability, and common operational practices.

The consultants' report will be ready in 2004/05. The Department will review and evaluate the report, consult with stakeholders, prepare a report including input from stakeholders together with

recommendations for an improved system.

Priority **To complete the development and begin implementation of a renewed program model for the Community Supports for Adults program. The goal is to have a modern, equitable, responsive and sustainable residential/vocational support system that will ensure persons with disabilities are healthy and safe, and have opportunities to participate as citizens in their communities.**

The current Community Supports for Adults (CSA) program was developed in 1976, almost thirty years ago, at a time when delivery of residential services was split between the province and municipalities. The province was responsible for the development and delivery of residential services for persons with disabilities through licensed Homes for Special Care only, including long term care, while individual municipalities developed and delivered unlicensed, small community based services.

In addition to Homes For Special Care, today the program includes a range of Community-Based Options, which until 1998 were delivered by the municipalities. Adult Service Centres, formerly part of Employment Support Services, are now also included in the CSA program. The Department of Health now has responsibility for Homes for the Aged, Nursing Homes, Adult In-Home Support, and Residential Care Facilities and Small Option Homes providing residential support for seniors.

Changes in program policy, residential support options and service delivery processes have not kept pace with changing program mandates and delivery approaches in other provinces. Access to services has become complicated and cumbersome, and there are gaps in the service continuum, particularly with respect to the lack of an in-home program and appropriate services for people with severe challenges.

During 2003/04 the Department began a comprehensive review of the CSA program. As part of the review process clients, families, advocacy organizations, service providers and staff were consulted. All agreed that current system is struggling and that change is long overdue. One of the common themes was the need for an in-home support program which would enable adults with disabilities to live at home with their families and to ease the transition from children's to adult services.

A Discussion Paper, based on research and a review of trends and models of delivery in other provinces was developed and released in March 2004 for public feedback. The paper presents a number of key concepts and policy options for improving the residential support system for adults with disabilities.

In 2004/05, Community Services will summarize the feedback from the Discussion Paper, finalize the development of a renewed program model and seek Government approval to begin implementation.

Strategic Goal - Nova Scotians are assisted in obtaining safe, affordable, appropriate and sustainable housing.

Priority **To continue to implement the Affordable Housing Program.**

The Department continues to move forward on a number of fronts to ensure Nova Scotians have access to safe and affordable housing. In September 2003 a 15-unit housing project in Middleton was completed. In November the Province entered into an Agreement with the Federal government to extend the suite of Residential Rehabilitation Assistance (RRAP) Programs for another three years. These programs assist low income Nova Scotians with needed home repairs and help seniors adapt their homes to enable them to continue to live independently. This financial assistance is crucial to Nova Scotians because we have both an aging housing stock, and an aging population.

In December a six-unit home ownership project was announced for the Creighton Garrish Housing Project in Halifax. In February 2004 the $1 million Home Preservation Program was announced. In March 2004, a Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued to gauge interest from potential developers for new rental housing projects. The Department anticipates a positive response to the RFP which will help position DCS to better meet the Province's affordable housing needs.

Nova Scotia's Affordable Housing Programs

Home Preservation Program - This is a program geared to assist low - and moderate-income homeowners who cannot afford the repairs necessary to make their homes safer and healthier. The assistance available exceeds the amount available under the existing Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP).

New Homeowner Program - This program is targeted to assist moderate-income households to move from rental accommodations into newly built, modest-priced homes in a designated Urban Area of Revitalization (UAR).

New Rental Housing Program - This program is designed to provide low - and moderate-income households with rental housing at or below average market rents for the area. The department is conducting research to identify areas of need and develop criteria for project proposals.

Rental Rehabilitation Program - This program is focused on rehabilitating existing rental buildings that require major renovation/regeneration or conversion. The Nova Scotia Housing Development Corporation will, in some cases, purchase and renovate the buildings and the units will be made

In 2004/05 Community Services will work in consultation with community agencies, non profit organizations and the private sector to identify ways to maximize the potential use of funds under the Canada Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Agreement.

Strategic Goal - Services are provided in an efficient and accountable manner through effective service delivery.

Priority **To improve client service delivery. The goal is to make sure Nova Scotians have timely access to information and staff, and that staff have the information, tools, and training they need to serve their clients. At the same time we want to foster a strong, open relationship with service providers, and to make sure that the Department's programs and services are organized to promote efficient and effective service delivery.**

Quality service delivery is a hallmark of good government. Research has shown that there are five factors which influence client satisfaction with government services. These factors include timeliness of response, access to knowledgeable staff, courtesy, fairness and outcome.

In 2004/05 the Department plans to undertake a number of initiatives which aim to strengthen and improve the way services are delivered to clients.

These initiatives include:

- improving access to staff by implementing protocols which cover office hours, scheduling at peak times, and telephone and messaging standards;

- improving client access to information, by developing and disseminating a series of descriptions of all programs and services;

- improving staff access to appropriate case information to support timely and informed decisions by beginning implementation of a new Integrated Case Management system in one or two program areas;

- ensuring the Department can continue to sustain a knowledgeable competent work force by preparing a succession management plan in conjunction with the Public Service Commission, which will include mechanisms to improve staff retention and recruitment, career plans for all employees, together with a training and development plan;

- strengthening the delivery of services purchased from service providers by implementing a strategy for ongoing dialogue lead by the Deputy Minister to improve relations between the Department and its provincial network of service provider organizations;

- completing the Departmental restructuring and beginning the integration process with the development of strategies to take advantage of opportunities for better program and service

alignment. As part of this process, a research project will be undertaken to examine the role of [redacted] to providing support to the service provider sector.

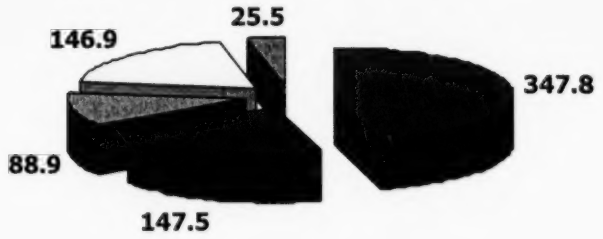
Budget Context

Estimated Budget Expenditures by Core Business

Core Business	Forecast 2003-04 ($ Millions)*	Budget 2004-05 ($ Millions)*
Income Assistance and Employment Support	**347.8**	**350.3**
Family and Children's Services	**147.5**	**158.2**
Housing Services	**88.9**	**95.5**
Community Supports for Adults	**146.9**	**155.8**
Administration and Support	**25.5**	**27.1**
Total Program Expenses - Gross Current	**756.6**	**786.9**
Recoveries	(96.1)	(92.8)
Total Program Expenses - Net of Recoveries	**660.5**	**694.1**
Salaries and Benefits	58.5	63.2
Funded Staff (FTEs)	1,029.4	1,131.2

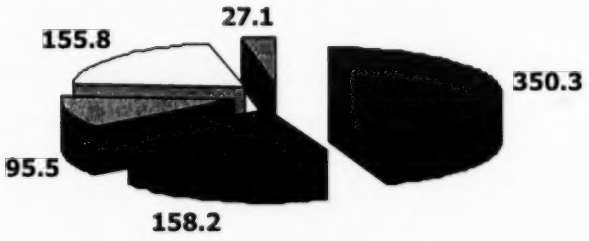
* Per 2004-05 Estimates Book.

Program Expenses - Budget Forecast 2003-04 ($ Millions)



- Income Assistance/Employment Support
- Family & Children's Services
- Housing Services
- Community Supports for Adults
- Administration & Support

Program Expenses - Budget 2004-05 ($ Millions)



- Income Assistance/Employment Support
- Family & Children's Services
- Housing Services
- Community Supports for Adults
- Administration & Support

Outcomes and Performance Measures

Attached are tables that set out the detailed information on outcomes and performance measures for each of the department's four core business areas. Measures are continually being refined. We have added three new measures under the Family & Children Services core business area to capture and track activity under the Early Childhood Development Initiative.

Core Business Area: Community Supports for Adults				
Outcome	**Measure**	**Data (BY=Base Year)**	**Target 2004-05[1]**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
People with disabilities have opportunities to live healthy, safe and independent lives.	1. Access to a range of residential supports.	2003-04 - Released public discussion paper with follow-up consultations with community stakeholders and other government departments. 2002-03 (BY) - Initiated process for a comprehensive redesign of the Community Supports for Adults Program.	Begin to implement changes as a result of the new model for services.	• Following the release of the Discussion Paper, consult with stakeholders. • Summarize the feedback and develop strategies for implementation. • Seek Government approval to begin to implement components of a renewed program model. • Develop a process to monitor usage and demand for services. • Begin to implement the Integrated Case Management technology system to better support the delivery of CSA program. • Implement ongoing dialogue between the Deputy Minister and service providers to improve stakeholder relations.

[1] In this table and all ensuing tables, progress toward this 2004-05 target should be looked at with respect to the initial base year data.

Core Business Area: Family & Children's Services

Outcome	Measure	Data (BY=Base Year)	Target 2004-05	Strategies to Achieve Target
Stable placement for children in care.	2. # of children placed in facilities outside the province.	March 31, 2003: 24 children March 31, 2002 (BY): 29 children March 31, 2001: 32 children March 31, 2000: 28 children March 31, 1999: 25 children	Decrease by 15%	• First year of full implementation of secure care which will have an impact on reduced number of children being sent out of the province.
	3. # of children in permanent care placed for adoption (agency adoption).	2002-03: 90 children 2001-2002(3/31/02) (BY): 96 children 2000-01: 94 children 1999-00: 92 children	Increase by 10%	• Redesign and begin to implement changes to the domestic adoption service delivery system to increase opportunities for children in care to live in a secure, nurturing family environment.
Better meet the early childhood development needs of children.	4. # and % of trained providers in licensed full day early childhood child care centres.	Apr. 2003: 933 FTE's (85%) Jan. 2002 (BY): 869 (78%) trained providers	Maintain at 85%	• Continue to monitor the implementation of training standards and provide support for training opportunities in the early childhood education field. • Work with the Early Childhood Education Training Institutes to implement curricula that will be inclusive of African Nova Scotians. • Provide expertise and support to Human Resource Development Canada in the development of programs that would provide opportunities for African Nova Scotians.

Core Business Area: Family & Children's Services				
Outcome	**Measure**	**Data (BY=Base Year)**	**Target 2004-05**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
	5. # of full-time licensed child care centres.	Licensed Child Care Centres Feb. 2003: 206 centres Jan. 2002 (BY): 204 centres	Maintain at current level	• Undertake a review of the current Child Care subsidy program to ensure maximum utilization of existing dollars.
	6. # of spaces in full-time licensed child care centres.	Jan. 2003: 8,367 spaces Jan. 2002 (BY) 8,095 spaces	Increase Base Year by 5%	• Use funds provided under the Early Childhood Development Initiatives to increase the number of child care spaces.

Core Business Area: Housing Service				
Outcome	**Measure**	**Data (BY=Base Year)**	**Target 2004-05**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
More households in safe, appropriate, affordable and sustainable housing.	7. # of homes upgraded through home repair/home adaptation programs.	2002-03: 2,887 hhlds. 2001-02: 2,943 hhlds. 2000-01 (BY): 2,828 hhlds.	Increase the number of households assisted by 50	• Implement new Home Preservation Program funded under the Canada Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Agreement.
	8. % of public housing budget allocated to maintenance and improvement of the province's public housing.	2002-03: 18.9 % 2001-02: 19.4 % 2000-01 (BY): 20.33%	Maintain the percentage at approximately 20%	• Prioritize public housing capital replacement projects based on health and safety requirements.
	9. % of cooperative and non profit housing organizations financially stable.	2002-03: 71 % 2001-02: 68 % 2000-01 (BY): 62.5%	75%	• Continue to partner with the co-operative sector on training and education and on developing a co-operative network to build capacity and increase opportunities for information exchange. • Work with individual co-operatives and non-profits to assist and train management.

Core Business Area: Housing Service				
Outcome	**Measure**	**Data (BY=Base Year)**	**Target 2006-07**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
	10. Affordable Housing Agreement funds committed to date on creating or renovating housing units.	2003-04: Committed $1.25 Million 2002-03 (BY): Committed $750,000 for a 15 unit project in Middleton	2005-06 Target Fully commit all $37.26 Million available under the Agreement by March 31, 2006	• Implement the Canada Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Agreement through partnerships with community-based organizations, municipalities, and the private sector to create or renovate housing units.

Core Business Area: Income Assistance and Employment Support				
Outcome	**Measure**	**Data (BY=Base Year)**	**Target 2004-05**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
Increase the level of self-sufficient individuals and families.	11. % of income assistance recipients involved in Employment Support Services who have secured full or part-time employment.	2002-03: 31% (Mar/03) 2001-02 (BY): 34% (Mar/02) 2000-01: 23%	Increase the Base year by 5%	• Evaluate the Employment Support Services component of the ESIA Program to ensure current programs and delivery are meeting the needs of clients. • Undertake an assessment of all cases to determine employment-readiness/barriers. • Undertake a review of the Child Care Subsidy Program and identify options for redesign, to ensure current subsidized child care dollars are utilized in the best possible way to support parents in need who have the opportunity to participate in training, take a job, or get involved in other activities in their community. • Provide prescription drug coverage (Pharmacare) to recipients leaving income assistance for work for up to one year to enable people to maintain employment.
	12. Income assistance as a % of total monthly income.	2002-03 (Jan/03): 69% 2001-02 (Jan/02): 73% 2000-01 (BY) (Jan/03): 70%	Decrease by 5%	
	13. % of total income assistance cases with wage income.	2002-03: 11% 2001-02 (BY): Approx. 10% of the total caseload (Jan02) 2000-01: 12%	Increase by 5%	

Core Business Area: Income Assistance and Employment Support				
Outcome	**Measure**	**Data (BY=Base Year)**	**Target 2004-05**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
	14. % of income assistance recipients who are assessed as being appropriate to participate in approved educational programs or employability activity who are participating in approved educational programs.	2002-03 (Mar/03): 43% 2001-02 (BY) (Mar/02): 43% 2000-01: 27%	Maintain the base year percentage.	• Continue to partner with the Department of Education, supporting the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning to ensure income assistance recipients have an opportunity to complete the adult high school diploma.
	15. % of children in Nova Scotia under 18 years of age living in low-income households as determined by Statistics Canada Low Income Cut Off (LICO's) after tax data.	2001: 13.2% 2000: 11.4% 1999 (BY): 11.3%	Reduce the %	